



The University of the State of New York  
The State Education Department

**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS (DTSDE)**



<b>BEDS Code</b>	101300010003
<b>School Name</b>	Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School
<b>School Address</b>	102 Harry Howard Avenue, Hudson, NY 12534
<b>District Name</b>	Hudson City School District
<b>School Leader</b>	Mark Brenneman
<b>Dates of Review</b>	20-21 May 2015
<b>School Accountability Status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus School
<b>Type of Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SED Integrated Intervention Team (IIT)

### School Information Sheet

<b>School Configuration (2014-15 data)</b>			
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	3 - 6	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	521
		<b>SIG Recipient</b>	YES
<b>Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes (2014-15)</b>			
<b># Transitional Bilingual</b>	0	<b># Dual Language</b>	0
		<b># Self-Contained English as a Second Language</b>	0
<b>Types and Number of Special Education Classes (2014-15)</b>			
<b># Special Classes</b>	6	<b># SETSS</b>	2
		<b># Integrated Collaborative Teaching</b>	5
<b>Types and Number of Special Classes (2014-15)</b>			
<b># Visual Arts</b>	1	<b># Music</b>	2
		<b># Drama</b>	0
<b># Foreign Language</b>	0	<b># Dance</b>	0
		<b># CTE</b>	0
<b>School Composition (most recent data)</b>			
<b>% Title I Population</b>	100	<b>% Attendance Rate</b>	94
<b>% Free Lunch</b>	57	<b>% Reduced Lunch</b>	9
<b>% Limited English Proficient</b>	7	<b>% Students with Disabilities</b>	18
<b>Racial/Ethnic Origin (most recent data)</b>			
<b>% American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0	<b>% Black or African American</b>	24
<b>% Hispanic or Latino</b>	12	<b>% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	10
<b>% White</b>	50	<b>% Multi-Racial</b>	5
<b>Personnel (most recent data)</b>			
<b>Years Principal Assigned to School</b>	6	<b># of Assistant Principals</b>	5
<b># of Deans</b>	0	<b># of Counselors/Social Workers</b>	3
<b>% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate</b>	100	<b>% Teaching Out of Certification</b>	0
<b>% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Years of Experience</b>	0	<b>Average Teacher Absences</b>	2.4
<b>Student Performance for Elementary and Middle Schools (2013-14)</b>			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	16.9	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	14.2
<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (4th Grade)</b>	82	<b>Science Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4 (8th Grade)</b>	n/a
<b>Student Performance for High Schools (2013-14)</b>			
<b>ELA Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	n/a	<b>Mathematics Performance at levels 3 &amp; 4</b>	n/a
<b>Credit Accumulation High Schools Only (2013-14)</b>			
<b>% of 1st year students who earned 10+ credits</b>	n/a	<b>% of 2nd year students who earned 10+ credits</b>	n/a
<b>% of 3rd year students who earned 10+ credits</b>	n/a	<b>4 Year Graduation Rate</b>	n/a
<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	n/a		
<b>Overall NYSED Accountability Status (2013-14)</b>			
<b>Reward</b>		<b>Recognition</b>	
<b>In Good Standing</b>		<b>Local Assistance Plan</b>	
<b>Focus District</b>	X	<b>Focus School Identified by a Focus District</b>	
<b>Priority School</b>			

### Accountability Status – Elementary and Middle Schools

<b>Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA (2012-13)</b>			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	x	<b>Black or African American</b>	x
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	YES	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	YES
<b>White</b>	x	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	x
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	x	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	x		
<b>Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics (2012-13)</b>			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	x	<b>Black or African American</b>	x
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	x	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	x
<b>White</b>	x	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	YES
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	x	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	x
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	x		
<b>Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science (2012-13)</b>			
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	YES	<b>Black or African American</b>	x
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	YES	<b>Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	YES
<b>White</b>	YES	<b>Multi-Racial</b>	YES
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	x	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	YES
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	YES		

**SCHOOL PRIORITIES AS WRITTEN BY THE SCHOOL:**

1. The building is looking to improve writing practices across all genres to meet the rigor of the common core learning standards to be demonstrated by performance on district benchmarks and writing rubrics.
2. Reduce disciplinary actions and increase students learning time.
3. Increase documentation of meetings and cross curricular conversations.
4. Increase of 3% on all NYS assessments.

## Information about the review

- The review was co-led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from the New York State Education Department. The team also included a district representative.
- The review team visited a total of 35 classrooms during the two-day review.
- Reviewers conducted focus groups with students, staff and parents
- Reviewers examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, school wide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- The school provided results of a student survey that 418 (80%) completed.
- The school provided results of a staff survey that 42 (71%) completed.
- The school provided results of a parent survey that 36 (17%) completed.
- There are four schools in Hudson City School District. The High School was identified as a focus school because of low graduation rates. The Superintendent made a decision to designate all schools in the district as focus schools. Hence, this review for Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School.

### Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission, and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 2:</b>				<b>D</b>	

**Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support:** The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 3:</b>				<b>D</b>	

**Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:** Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.2	School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 4:</b>				<b>D</b>	

**Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:** The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school's vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 5:</b>				<b>D</b>	

**Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:** The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4	The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR TENET 6:</b>				<b>D</b>	

<b>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions:</b> Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being, and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>D</b>
---	---------------------	----------

The school has received a rating of ***Developing*** for Tenet 2 – School Leader Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader reported the school has developed a school improvement plan that identifies school improvement goals along with a data-driven mission for student achievement. The school leader indicated the plan was drawn up with the input of some members of the school community, including representatives of teachers, support staff, and parents. However, the review team found that the school goals in the plan are not consistently specific, measurable, ambitious, results-oriented and timely (SMART), which limits the ability of the school leader to monitor and evaluate the rate of progress. Teachers, support staff, and parents reported that the school leader does not consistently and rigorously ensure that the goals, which include improvements in instruction, student achievement, and student behavior are successfully shared with the school community or that they are effectively monitored and evaluated. An improvement plan document, provided by the school leader, contained some benchmark assessment data of intended student growth in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. However, the plan lacked timelines, specific targets, and robust monitoring procedures to track growth towards the stated targets, which limited its effectiveness as a tool for promoting sustained student achievement.
- The school leader reported he has allocated some resources to address student needs. Documents and data reviewed by the IIT indicate that students attending the expanded learning time program have a higher average growth on benchmark assessments for ELA than those who do not. Discussions with the school leader indicate that he successfully advocated for and hired new English as a second language teachers (ESL). In addition, he has recently successfully requested from the district, additional days of support from the mathematics coach. However, the review team did not find evidence that the school leader has put in place procedures to check the impact that these personnel decisions have had on improving student learning. The school leader also noted that he has used fiscal resources to fund professional development (PD) efforts to support and reinforce Response to Intervention (RtI) practices, which has increased teachers’ understanding of ways to address student social and emotional needs. The review team found that initiatives such as the expanded learning time program serve just under one- half of the school community. While these initiatives aim to reinforce and develop ELA and mathematics skills, many students are not able to participate in these opportunities because of the lack of transportation home after the events. The review team did not find evidence of consistent monitoring and evaluation of the use of resources to assess its impact on student success and school improvement.
- There is a schedule for classroom observations to ensure that the requirements of the district’s Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process are addressed. Discussions with teachers indicate that all teachers receive formal and informal classroom observations from the school leaders. Documentation examined by the review team shows that feedback is aligned to established criteria but is not always actionable and does not clearly identify the main areas for improvement. Teachers reported that there are no processes in place by which the school leader re-visits to check that improvements have occurred, and the school leader stated that information gleaned from observations

is not consistently used to shape and inform professional development (PD) offerings. Consequently, the ability of the school leader to hold teachers accountable for their instructional practices is limited, which minimizes student success.

- A review of documents and discussions with the school leader and staff indicate that systems and structures to examine and improve school-wide practices are developing, especially in relation to tracking student growth in ELA and mathematics. However, this is still a work in progress. Student data is shared with teachers four times a year, in meetings between school leaders and individual teachers. The school leader noted that this helps to promote teachers' accountability for student growth. Although a classroom observation schedule is in place, the review team found that it is not leading to significant and sustained improvement in instructional practices. Attendance is monitored regularly and current data shows that at 95.1 percent, attendance has steadily improved over the last three years. However, data collected regarding disciplinary incidents and school suspensions is not analyzed to identify trends and patterns. Consequently, measurable progress towards some critical school-wide goals is limited.

**Recommendation:**

- School leaders should accelerate the pace for school improvement by:
  - making sure that the school goals identified in the School Comprehensive Education plan (SCEP) are specific and measurable, shared with all staff, students, and parents and are monitored each quarter to identify the rate of progress;
  - identifying the most important weaknesses in teachers' instruction and giving staff actionable feedback for improvement; and
  - frequently monitoring whether instruction has improved based on previous feedback.

**Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support:** The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 3 – Curriculum Development and Support.

- The school leader reported that he ensures that instructional coaches work with teachers in their classrooms and during meetings to develop their understanding of implementing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in ELA and mathematics, and they are beginning to address other content areas. Reviewers noted during visits to classrooms that teachers use the Engage NY modules for ELA and mathematics and supplement these modules with two other commercially produced curricular guidance documents. Teachers stated that district led PD has focused on deepening teachers' awareness of aligning CCLS curriculum and using instructional shifts although the review team found that instructional shifts, for example, writing from sources or focus and coherence were not consistent in planning or classroom delivery across the school. Although reviewers saw some evidence in planning documents of teachers beginning to use data to make curricula adjustments, this practice is inconsistent.

- A review of lesson plans by the IIT indicates evidence of some learning objectives, subject specific vocabulary, and general alignment to CCLS. However, reviewers found that planning is not consistently based on data and does not incorporate a progression of sequenced and scaffolded skills. Classroom visits indicated that while teachers sometimes plan different activities, in practice, many students have similar learning experience and not all students' needs are addressed. For example, on many, but not all occasions, students of different abilities were given the same task to complete often resulting in the more able easily completing the task while the less able were left struggling. Reviewers noted that during a grade four meeting led by the literacy coach, teachers worked collaboratively as they analyzed students' assessment papers to determine what they needed to re-plan for teaching. However, the review team found that this practice is not consistent across all grades.
- During classroom visits, reviewers observed a few examples of interdisciplinary curricula, such as students in grade three linking their ELA lesson with science as they learned about the life cycle of a frog. The use of technology through the use of Cromebooks was observed in some lessons. For example, in grade five, students used Cromebooks to improve their writing as they learned about government issues. However, these examples were not typical, and the school leader and teachers stated that although interdisciplinary curricula planning is developing, it is not part of a school-wide formalized plan. Teachers noted that lessons focusing on integrated learning were the result of individual teacher initiative rather than the result of formal collaborative planning. Consequently, not all students experience multiple opportunities to engage in thoughtful cross-curricular activities that increase their ability to be academically successfully.
- Teachers' interim assessments for ELA and mathematics are consistently administered across the school three times each year. An analysis of this data by the review team shows that student growth in ELA and mathematics in some classes, both within and between grades, is better than in others. The school leader indicated that this information is used to ensure that teachers are held accountable for their students' academic performance through meetings with school leaders four times a year. However, data that is collected on all students is not yet used to inform curricula decisions and adjustments. Discussions with teachers and students indicate that test and assessment data is not yet used as tool for providing feedback to students that highlights areas of their academic performance in need of improvement. This lack of feedback also prevents students from taking greater responsibility and ownership for their own learning.

**Recommendation:**

- School leaders and coaches should improve the quality of the curriculum that students receive by:
  - checking that lesson planning is not only aligned to CCLS but includes instructional shifts;
  - expecting teachers to use assessment data to put students in ability groups, dependent on their assessment scores, particularly in ELA and math lessons; and
  - expecting teachers to use assessment data to plan differentiated activities for each group.

<b>Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions:</b> Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.	<b>Tenet Rating</b>	<b>D</b>
---	---------------------	----------

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 4 – Teacher Practices and Decisions.

- The school leader reported he ensures that discussions between teachers and school leaders about data and how students are performing in their classes academically take place four times a year. Teachers then establish goals for different groups of students including students with disabilities and ELLs, but not all these goals are challenging enough to extend the learning of all students. Classroom observations by reviewers show that students are not always fully engaged, for example misbehaving or acting out, when activities are not closely matched to their academic needs and abilities, and teachers do not regularly check students’ understanding as lessons progress. The review team found that school leaders were not consistent in monitoring teachers’ planning and delivery of instruction or in providing actionable feedback, which minimizes improvements in instructional practices and student learning.
- During classroom visitations, the review team found that teachers’ lesson plans were usually aligned to CCLS in ELA and mathematics and in most other subjects such as science. However, teachers did not consistently provide sufficient differentiation to enable students to complete the assigned activity. Some students finished very quickly, while others struggled to complete the assignment on time, which either limited student participation in the lesson or increased inappropriate behavior. The review team observed some teachers using learning materials such as worksheets with little complex text or posing differentiated questions that did not challenge students of differing aptitudes to extend their thinking and produce answers that included academic vocabulary appropriate to their abilities
- Teachers stated that the school has behavioral expectations for students but that they are inconsistently applied by different teachers. Students reported that behavior often disrupts the learning of others. Visits to classrooms show that the school’s diverse groups of students are acknowledged during a few lessons, such as in the two classes that contain students with specific needs who require a modified curriculum but this practice is not consistent. During discussions, students indicated that other students sometimes laugh at them if they ask or answer questions incorrectly and that students who often misbehave, behave better when visitors are in the school. Although the IIT observed no unacceptable behavior during the on-site visit, a recent survey indicated that over 75 percent of students felt that student behavior is a problem at the school. In addition, only one third of students in the survey reported that their teacher is interested in their life and who they are. Observations indicate that teachers provide few opportunities in class for students to discuss their views and opinions or to share their values, perspectives or culture.
- The review team found some evidence to indicate that teachers are beginning to use assessment data to inform their instruction, but this is inconsistent across the school. For example, students in grade five were observed reading texts confidently and independently because the texts about rainforests matched their reading levels. However, teachers and school leaders reported that although the analysis of data to assess and track student performance has improved, it is not used as well to modify instructional practices or to make adjustments within an individual lesson. A review of student work shows that teachers do not routinely provide feedback that informs students about what they need to

do to improve, or move to the next step of learning. Instead, feedback tends to be over praiseworthy or related to effort rather than clear, actionable, academically related guidance.

**Recommendation:**

- School leaders and coaches should focus on improving the quality of instruction by:
  - expecting teachers to consistently implement behavioral expectations in all classes;
  - expecting teachers to consistently check students’ understanding as lessons progress;
  - expecting teachers to always ask questions that are differentiated to address the different ability groups in each class;
  - expecting teachers to consistently ask higher-order questions, giving students time to think and then articulating their thoughts.

**Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:** The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 5 – Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health.

- The school leader stated and students reported during interviews, that the school identifies the teaching and support staff that are there to support their needs if they have any concerns or problems. While the school has an electronic referral system, and all incidents are documented by the instructional support team, the review team did not find evidence that the data that is collected is analyzed to identify specific trends and patterns. The most recent data shows a decline of referrals related to disciplinary incidents in the last two years; however, the review team found no evidence of a comprehensive analysis that identifies trends and patterns, reasons for these incidents, or a plan of action to remedy these problems. Consequently, the referral system does not always address barriers to social and emotional developmental health, which limits student success.
- The school leader reported the school is looking at different programs in order to decide the most appropriate one for promoting and supporting the teaching of student social and emotional developmental health needs. Planning documents indicate that students receive opportunities to reinforce and focus on different themes, such as the implications of bullying. In addition, support staff state that specific days are set aside for students to focus on how to behave in different circumstances and how to deal with challenging circumstances that arise both in and out of school. The review team found little evidence from examination of documents or discussions with staff, of recent PD to build adult capacity to support student social and emotional developmental health needs. In the past, special education staff have received PD on de-escalation of extreme student behaviors but other staff did not receive this training and no further training is planned. Currently, an issue relating to cyber-bullying among a small group of students is being addressed by support staff carrying out meetings and discussions with the alleged students involved although a few parents raised concerns with reviewers about how well the issue was being addressed by the school.
- Discussions with school leaders, staff, parents and students indicate that there is a lack of understanding and awareness of what constitutes the school’s vision for ensuring that students’ social

and emotional developmental health needs are fully addressed. Teachers, support staff, parents, and students were not able to articulate specific goals that the school is striving for or the roles they need to play to achieve a safe environment conducive to learning or how it is to be measured. Consequently, the ability of the school community to work in unison to identify and meet the social and emotional needs of students and student success is hindered.

- The school has no specific plan that focuses on how to use data to address student social and emotional developmental needs. Data is collected to record attendance and discipline incidents, but there is little evidence to show that data is deeply analyzed to assess problems and find solutions to issues. For example, during discussions with reviewers staff noted that discipline incidents decreased when comparing the 2013-2014 school year with the data from 2014-2015 at the time of the on-site visit. Although documentation provided to the review team confirmed this finding, reviewers did not find evidence that staff analyzed trends and patterns indicating why certain behaviors continue to occur. Staff, parents, and students expressed concern about a small number of students who are involved in disrupting learning during lessons, but the review team did not find evidence of a plan to rectify the situation.

**Recommendation:**

- School leaders and support staff should develop and implement a vision, which addresses the roles support staff play in meeting student social and emotional development needs, and include:
  - deeply analyzing data, particularly to identify trends and patterns in student behavior, share this with the teachers, parents, and students, and take actionable steps to alleviate issues; and
  - using information from student and staff surveys to identify issues relating to why not all students feel safe in school, why some students are unkind to others and threaten and bully each other, and why some students are disrespectful and misbehave during lessons.

**Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement:** The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

**Tenet Rating**

**D**

The school has received a rating of **Developing** for Tenet 6 – Family and Community Engagement.

- The school leader reported he communicated the school’s high academic expectations to parents through meetings and special events, such as meet the teacher night and when the school sends home progress reports and report cards. However, both staff and parents stated that attendance is sometimes not high at school events. The school leader acknowledged that there is a cross-section of parents who do not attend school events, that this affects the school’s ability to address some students’ needs and to ensure that all students achieve academic success. Parents reported that communication between school and home is inconsistent. During interviews, reviewers found that not all parents were aware of the school goals. Parents indicated that some teachers are better at communicating information and expectations than others. Although the parent portal is available and provides information about student achievement, parents stated that not all teachers keep it up to date.

- The school leader and staff engage in some reciprocal communication. However, parents noted inconsistencies in procedures, which confuse them. For example, students are all given agenda books to communicate between home and school. However, parents report that although they are used well in grades three and four, as students move into grades five and six, this is not always the case because the dialogue between home and school decreases. The school leader stated that school and district documents for families are translated into the school's most prevalent languages, such as Spanish, Bengali, and Arabic. Translators are available for most school events and meetings with parents, but there are infrequent occasions when parents who speak English as a second language have difficulty being understood because translators are not available. The school leader and staff reported they are beginning to reflect on the school's effectiveness in communicating with parents, but the review team did not find evidence of a specific action plan to address the issue of parents who do not attend school events or are more difficult to contact.
- The review team did not find evidence that the school is providing training to parents to enable them to support their children's learning and growth at home. Teachers indicated that in the past, most staff in the school have received PD training and learned about crucial elements related to families living in poverty. However, the school has not offered recent PD to staff to develop their awareness of improving partnerships with families, which hinders their ability to develop and sustain robust and focused home-school connections.
- Teachers share academic achievement data with families, such as report cards and progress reports. They also share some information during meetings between class teachers and parents. However, discussions with parents show that not all parents feel that the information they receive about their children's progress is always helpful or easy to understand. The school leader stated that the school has not provided support for parents in interpreting the data that is sent to them, and this limits parents' ability to support their child's learning. Teachers and parents indicated that not all parents are well informed or involved in their children's education. Consequently, not all families are empowered to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.

**Recommendation:**

- School leaders and staff should work together to increase the number of families who are involved in their children's education by:
  - organizing two family nights per grade level, one academic and one for social and emotional topics, to reinforce and develop awareness of academic expectations and social and emotional supports; and
  - increasing the number of parents who access the Parent Portal and reinforcing and developing their awareness of the use of it.